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ABSTRACT

This paper briefly reviews the origins of the modern professions and examines in detail three sociological models of the professions and the professionalization process, in each case supplying indications of relevance to the library field. Models discussed include the trait or attribute, the functional, and the power or occupational control models of professionalization. The paper reviews the strengths and weaknesses of each of these sociological approaches in understanding the development of the library occupation. Incidental attention is also paid to the general family of information- and knowledge-treating occupations (publishing, archival management, and information science), and to librarianship's position in this group. The nature of library work and the implications of the American Library Association's (ALA) position on library education and manpower are discussed. William J. Goode's assertion that librarianship is not a profession is analyzed and refuted. The paper concludes by presenting a composite model for the library profession, suggesting that professional schools combined with a knowledge base comprise the institutionalization of the profession and that the combination of institutionalization, the existence of professional associations, and the strength of collective orientations yields professional autonomy. A copy of the author's vita is provided. (Author/ESR)

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The Professionalization of Librarianship

by

Michael F. Winter

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ABSTRACT

This paper touches on the origins of the modern professions, and examines in detail three major sociological models of the professions and the professionalization process, in each case supplying indications of relevance to the library field. Some incidental attention is paid also to the general family of information- and knowledge-treating occupations (publishing, archival management, information science), and to librarianship's position in this group. But the major emphasis is on the development of the library occupation with the paper stressing the strengths and weaknesses of the sociological approaches in understanding that development. It concludes with a suggested combined model of the professionalization process and applies this model to the library profession.

THE RISE OF THE MODERN PROFESSIONS

In the nineteenth century the great movements of industrialization in Western Europe and the United States came of age. Announced in the works of Saint-Simon, Spencer, Comte, and others, the scientific and technological disciplines knew not only vast advances on the scholarly plane, but became linked with the factory system of industrial production. With this development came a precipitous increase in the number of occupations found in typical industrial societies, and thus a hitherto unknown complexity in the social division of labor.[1] Although a need for books and other sources of information has existed from the earliest of historic times, librarians, along with archivists and publishers, did not begin to show any distinctively modern sense of occupational identity until the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[2] Information science as a discipline may also be dated from this period, but the emergence of a group of practitioners identifying themselves as such did not occur until the period between the world wars, when the extraordinary potential of micrographics and computer science began to be realized in the storage and retrieval of information.

The information fields emerged as a result of the increase of complexity in the division of labor, and a parallel increase in the quantity and complexity of the knowledge—practical, technical, and theoretical—and available information that are put to work in typical occupational routines.[3] Like other occupational groups, librarians and other information specialists have found that work increasingly requires a commitment to the acquisition of technical skills and the mastery of theoretical principles. In these

cases the complexity of the occupational structure promotes the need for formal programs to train new groups of workers.

From a technological point of view, this expansion of knowledge and information, originally promised by the invention of movable type printing and later realized by the development of mass production techniques, floods society with vast amounts of knowledge, information and factual data.[4] This aspect of the development of industrial society became so prominent in the early years of the present century that the production and dissemination of information became a partly autonomous locus of socio-economic activity—virtually a separate social sector with distinct functions and mechanisms of operation. At the same time that knowledge of a practical nature grew in such marked dimensions, a similar growth occurred in the production of pure or theoretical knowledge, corresponding to the expansion of research activities among industrial scientists, academics and government researchers.

Librarianship was the first of the information-related occupations to confront the need for new ways of classifying and organizing this immense volume of recorded knowledge. In terms of the professionalization process, it provides a prototypical example of the information occupations. By the late nineteenth century it became clear, especially in the United States and Great Britain, that the old bibliophilic model of the scholar learned in philosophy, the natural sciences and philology would not meet these new occupational demands, however, much need remained for the older type. Special training in organizational problems was required. It was time for the recognition, in Abraham Kaplan's words, of the need for personnel specialized in the "meta-sciences"—disciplines, that is, without traditional liberal arts subjects as their main concerns. What is called for, rather, is a group of disciplines whose subject is the organization of knowledge itself.[6]

Kaplan's point is a useful one, and merits more detailed consideration, for it is based on the intellectual reflection of a fundamental social change. Among the more established liberal disciplines, philosophy (especially logic and metaphysics), linguistics and philology and certain aspects of mathematics all may be said to provide something of a meta-scientific perspective. Among the newer fields, computer and information sciences immediately come to mind. One need not argue for the value of the latter group, since most current programs in library education have already recognized their importance. Kaplan's point is most suggestive for the older meta-scientific disciplines, which are often barely treated as part of the knowledge base underlying librarianship as a field of study and practice.

If we look for a moment at philosophy, we see a strong contribution that may be made on the theoretical level to organizational problems. Systems of document classification, for example, are usually based on broad logical assumptions regarding the structure of classes and their interrelationships. The traditional opposition between the deduction of particular propositions from general ones, and the establishment of valid empirical generalizations through induction, is reflected in the difference between deductive classification schemes and faceted schemes. In recent years a third alternative has emerged, represented by members of the Classification Research Group, who argue for ideally flexible systems which pragmatically follow the development of new disciplines and the emergence of interdisciplinary studies or altogether new disciplines.[7] This alternative follows, in effect, the pragmatist rejection of formal logic initiated by John Dewey, and tacitly rests on the idea of an instrumental or experimental logic. At the moment the matter rests here, but there is no reason why further considerations of developments in logic might not suggest new strategies for developing or improving classification schemes. If earlier theorists looked to Bacon, Russell and Whitehead, or pragmatism, contemporary and future classification theorists may turn to a whole series of developments in contemporary philosophy of science and logic for new inspiration. Karl Popper's "hypothetico-deductive method," for example, and the synthesis of induction and deduction which it implies, suggests one possibility.

If the nineteenth century was the age of the industrial revolution, the twentieth is the age of complex occupational structures which appear as the logical outcome of industrialization, and result in new types of social organization. This is as true for the knowledge and information sectors of society as it is for the primary sector of production. Indeed, with the general economic tendency for work to shift somewhat away from production, to secondary and tertiary sectors, one might argue that it is even more true. The expansion of the tertiary sectors of the economy includes much more than the production of information as a commodity, of course. The full story involves as well the rise of mass transportation, marketing, scientific management, and related support services of many kinds.[8] In any case the important point is that the complexity of contemporary industrial society presents acute problems for routine functioning, and many of these center on the organization, storage, retrieval, and dissemination of information. For Ortega y Gasset, this is the central problem of the modern librarian, as distinguished from the older "keepers" of manuscripts and early printed books, both of whom exercise functions which we might recognize today as more preservational than organizational.[9] The ideology of preservation, one might say, has given way to the ideology of management and control.

If we are living in the age of complex occupational organization, and a correspondingly complex network of related social organizations, one of its most distinctive forms is bureaucracy—literally, control according to office. Complex organization introduces special problems of social order. Durkheim was among the first to discern that the industrial society had forever altered our occupational lives by absorbing us into the great, functionally-differentiated organism of economic production; Weber saw that the transformation of traditional communities into impersonal mass organizations was accompanied by the emergence of new types of power and prestige. In different ways, both Durkheim and Weber were trying to explain how social order was to be maintained in a social structure that increasingly loosened human ties with older forms of local organization. Criticizing the limitations of orthodox Marxism, Weber maintained that the "means of production" were supplemented by the "means of administration" and the "means of legitimate violence," by which he meant the authorized powers of the new nation-states. And the means of organization was concentrated, not only in the hands of managerial and entrepreneurial capitalists, but also in a developing subtype of the ruling class—the state functionary. Weber's ideal type or model of bureaucratic organization includes a hierarchy of office, fixed jurisdiction, specialized training of officials, the existence of written and printed files, and a formal chain of command.[10] Despite a tendency to ignore the ways in which no actual bureaucratic situation totally conforms to the model, Weber's contribution retains its paradigmatic status.[11]

For Durkheim the transformation of the social division of labor precipitated a crisis in the social and psychological adjustment of the individual to the emerging social structure. In the process of moving from a relatively simple to a more complex, highly differentiated division of labor, industrial society had developed the problem of anomie, or normlessness, defining the individual in increasingly functional economic terms and removing many of the social restraints that had previously limited the desire to accumulate wealth and provided individuals with an overall sense of social purpose and belonging. For Weber the advance of industrial society meant the spread of "rationalization"—the subjugation of conduct to the functional needs of the marketplace of capitalism. Thus in speaking of the "disenchantment" (*Entzauberung*) of the social world, Weber called attention to the erosion of purpose and meaning inherent in the materialism of capitalist social organization. Bureaucratic social organization thus appears as industrial society's solution to the problem of self-regulation and cohesion that Durkheim had isolated in the idea of anomie.[12] The traditional sense of belonging to a local community, of loyalty to traditional craft-like occupational groups, and of membership in a locally-

rooted nuclear, or extended family, were undermined by the very same division of labor whose attendant bureaucratic organization assumed the role of the coordination and regulation of social action.

As is often the case in periods of decisive social change, these developments were not without a painful irony. Durkheim had noticed that in certain ways the coming of industrial society meant freedom from the restrictions of older forms of constraint. Indeed, with its bewildering array of occupations, its technological advances, and the intense concentration of new material and intellectual resources in the growing urban centers, industrial society encouraged the development of individualism, came equipped with an ideology of individual advancement, and provided unsuspected opportunities for social mobility. And yet at the same time that industrialism genuinely liberated individuals from the remains of feudal social organization, it quickly subjected them to its own harsh form of discipline. Socioeconomic complexity requires a parallel complexity of organization, and this in turn requires formalization, hierarchical arrangement, or rationalization—and the key to this use of the term "rationalization" is the subjection of individual impulse to organizational imperatives. By individualizing persons as workers, by stressing the uniqueness of each occupation's contribution to our social and economic welfare, advanced industrial society had nurtured within itself a counterthrust to the advance of bureacratization. The more concerned we are with our individuality and our personal occupational achievements, the less likely are we to appreciate being subjected to formal bureaucratic routines. And yet the more individuated we become, the greater is the need for authoritative mechanisms of social order to coordinate social action.

It is against this background that the drama of professionalization, originally played out in medicine, law, university teaching, and the clergy, but later enveloping numerous other occupations, achieves its peculiar resolution. Professionalization, we may say, is one effective way in which the middle-class occupations can resist the encroachment of bureaucratic authority.[13] What is at stake here is the attempt of occupational groups to become independent, autonomous work organizations. Although Durkheim had not foreseen this precisely, he had nonetheless predicted the formation of guild-like organizations serving as buffer zones against the functional anonymity of the modern industrial division of labor.[14] Thus the importance of the professional association, licensing procedures and ethics codes, formal training programs, legitimate monopolies over certain bodies of knowledge, service orientation, and community recognition.[15] All these legitimate the professional's freedom and protect it, enabling the practitioner to respond to external pressure without submit-

ting to the control of outside agents. They also provide a sense of social cohesion founded on occupational goals and values, and encourage the formation of a specifically professionalized personal identity. Professional practice, in this sense, is incompatible with the bureaucratic discipline of the industrial factory, where sharp distinctions between intellectual and manual labor, conception and execution, etc., work to prevent the development of occupational cohesiveness. And the "outside influence" mentioned previously is not restricted to authoritarian social structures, but includes as well the threat of competition from other, allegedly nonlegitimate practitioners. Somewhat less central to the present discussion is the assumption that the service orientation of professional life, rooted in "the pursuit of science and liberal learning," contrasts in a marked way with the profit orientation of business.[16]

But the relationship between the development of the professions from occupations and bureaucratic organizations is not one of simple opposition, for in certain respects professionalism and bureaucracy are products of the same set of socioeconomic developments. There is a general tendency for greater professional autonomy to correlate with moderate levels of bureaucratization, and not, as might be expected, with low levels only.[17] Thus the traditional distinction between the independent and the organizationally-situated professional is less clear now than it may have been before the systematic bureaucratization of work became as widespread as it is today. Very few professionals escape altogether the bureaucratic situation and its effects on autonomous action. In any case, Hall[18] reports that the correlation between autonomy and levels of bureaucratization appears to hold for all but the "technical competence" dimension of professionalization. (In assessing the process of professionalization in librarianship and other occupations, this may have considerable importance, for it provides an empirical foundation for measurement.) At the same time it has been found that professionalization is positively correlated with increases in the size of a library organization's administrative structure.[19] Thus even though professionals resist bureaucratic authority, the need for their services, and their social function generally, is frequently rooted in conditions which bring bureaucratization along with them. And their ability to function autonomously is to some degree even enhanced by them. Also it seems clear that in many cases there is a tendency for the typical concerns of professional and professionalizing workers to reflect the concerns of middle-class persons in work, where issues like autonomy and the use of formal education predominate over a whole range of typical working class concerns. The relationship between professionalism and the class structure of advanced industrial society, much too complex to be

considered here, is partly reflected in this ambivalent connection between professionalism and bureaucracy.[20]

It has long been recognized that professionalization involves the safeguarding of perceived occupational rights and privileges, just as the organization of working class labor into labor unions is taken for granted by virtually everyone. But while most of us immediately recognize the organizational activities of working class occupations as part of class conflict in industrial society, we are slower to see this as an essential factor in the development of a profession. The altruistic—and at times self-congratulatory—language of official pronouncements, professional ethics codes, association reports, and in-house histories must be seen at least partly as the product of attempts to legitimate a certain set of occupational interests. Thus, as Goode points out,[21] the attempt to procure professional status is a keenly competitive process, exclusivist and elitist in form, which has for its major goal the appropriation of social rewards through restriction of access to privileged occupational groups. Just as there is, in any given time period, a relatively fixed amount of income and social prestige for which workers compete, so also is there a relatively fixed amount of social rewards for which occupational groups compete. Thus, although any such group may wish to professionalize, only a few will actually succeed in attaining the high status of the traditional professions during a given period, just as only a few persons will earn millions of dollars a year or become full professors at elite universities. Indeed this is only logical, for scarcity itself is one of the conditions of valued reward. Accordingly, when we speak of attempts by librarians to become professionals, we must keep in mind some of this background, although we will also see that this view of the matter has certain pronounced limitations. None of this is to deny, of course, that any given occupational group may achieve professional status in the sense in which we speak of a "professional" as a person who is a concerned, dedicated, skilled, and sensitive practitioner of a particular occupation. That sense of professionalism is open to many occupational groups, and offers its own intrinsic sense of satisfaction. But it is not automatically a gain in the narrower sense of the term as Goode is using it here. Thus Goode argues that librarians are not now professionals and are not likely to become so in the near future.[22]

This is a crucial point, to which we may return after a closer look at librarianship and an attempt to define it as a species of intellectual work. At the same time that we recognize the importance of Goode's observation, we should also point out that from a sociological point of view the most important question is not: Is it or is it not a profession? but rather: What degree of professionalization has a certain group shown?[23] Furthermore,

Goode's argument—examined more closely in a later section of this paper—is based on two closely-related assumptions that should not be casually accepted. He assumes first that scarcity is the principal determinant of reward and value; and second, that we gauge the success of an occupation in the professionalizing process by its ability to assure its practitioners tangible rewards. Professionalization is thus rather too quickly reduced to a process of socioeconomic competition, which it surely is, but not exclusively. In fact, Goode's view also assumes that determining the extent of professionalization is a relatively easy matter, one of matching up a given occupational group against an established standard; we will also have a closer look at that assumption.

THE EARLY VIEW: THE TRAIT MODEL OF PROFESSIONALIZATION

It may be useful to schematize some of the preceding and provide a sharper focus for the question of professionalization. On this view, an ideal type or model of a fully professionalized occupation would include a least the following interdependent elements:

1. a representative occupational association concerned with general standards of professional activity;
2. the establishment of formal educational programs affiliated with a university;
3. the creation and maintenance of a body of theoretical and practical knowledge—the mastery of which is a precondition of admission to professional status—along with the presence of a core of scholars who regularly contribute to this body of knowledge;
4. the development of ethics codes regulating the conduct of professional workers;
5. the cultivation of an orientation of service to a specified group of persons; and
6. the social recognition of professional status from some significant segment of the surrounding community.

On some, but not by any means on all trait lists, one also finds the characteristic of autonomy, defined as freedom from outside influence and general orientation toward colleagues in solving professional problems. This is clearly very central to most uses of the term *profession*, and so is included here, even though it is not always separately identified.

While it may not be possible to provide a single rank-ordering of these, some are particularly central to the professionalization process. The devel-

opment of a body of theoretical knowledge—closely allied to the university professional or graduate school—is one of the most central, for without it the knowledge base of an occupation is primarily a set of codified technical routines. In judging the quality of the knowledge base, the most significant factor is the proper combination of breadth and depth: too broad, and its generality approaches the threshold of common sense knowledge; too narrow, and it does not really require significant theoretical aptitude.[24] Traditionally, librarianship and publishing have been thought to fall toward the overly general end of this continuum, information science is usually put about midway, and archival administration toward the overly specific. Probably narrowness in the knowledge base is, in the long run, more of a block to professionalization than breadth, since it discourages the formation of certain imaginative, problem-solving habits of mind, which in turn makes it easier for persons outside the occupation to control its activities. With some of the more recent emphasis on information science in librarianship, the old suspicions against generalism may lose some of their foundation. But there is, in fact, evidence of considerable theoretical development in the core areas of library science, strangely ignored in many discussions on professional development. Some recent work in the theory of bibliography shows this to be true,[25] but it is only one of the examples that could be produced. In general, it is the development of classification and indexing, now a vast and complex theoretical field, which is most significant in the growth of the knowledge base of library and information science.

The development of the knowledge base of an occupation is closely linked with its ability to maintain autonomy in practice, since the breadth and depth of such knowledge prevents outsiders from easily mastering its application. This is largely a practical matter—prevention of encroachment—but the importance of the knowledge base has a philosophical, almost moral dimension as well. This has to do, ideally, with the use of the imagination in work—with the ability to project on the intellectual plane possible problems and to examine them in the abstract. It is a form of intellectual craftsmanship. The mastery of a theoretical body of knowledge is thus not restricted to the application of principles, for it includes insight into the formation of the principles themselves and the assumptions underlying them. The moral dimension of the active exercise of the imagination lies with the sense of professional responsibility that comes from the ability to creatively solve problems in the interests of those lacking specialized professional knowledge.

The professional association is important for its function of governance, standard-setting, and for its role in the promotion of scholarship leading to

theoretical development in the field. As a whole, the American Library Association (ALA) is less oriented toward research than are comparable academic and professional groups, but in part this is only a reflection of its extremely diverse membership. More specialized groups within it, such as the Library History Round Table, the Library Research Round Table, and the Association of College and Research Libraries, fulfill a range of scholarly functions. Other related groups perform a similar role, such as the Association of American Library Schools and the Association of Research Libraries. One important variable in assesing the significance of the association is its authority over workers in the field, and there seems to be considerable variation in this across the professions. It may be useful to consider here Wilensky's finding[26] that in less highly professionalized groups the formation of the association often precedes the establishment of the university educational program. The date of the founding of the American Library Association (1876) precedes by over a decade the first university library school.

The development of ethics codes regulating the conduct of workers, especially in the area of professional/client relations, frequently lags behind other developments. The ALA did not develop an official code until 1938, some 60 years after its own formation. And this practice is not at all unusual, for there are (at this writing) a fair number of professional associations having no ethics codes at all. A recent study reports that there are at least 39 professional associations without formal ethics codes, including the American Association of Social Psychiatry, the American Economic Association, the American Psychoanalytic Association, the American Society of Human Genetics, and the American Statistical Association.[27] Again, the authority of the association is reflected in the code, and there is considerable variation in the official reactions to code infractions. In part this depends on the importance which professionals attach to maintaining a recognized monopoly over the dispensing of their services, and this in turn reflects the degree to which an occupation may be threatened by competitors.[28] Given that until recently librarians have not experienced great challenges from other information specialists, it is not surprising that the code is supported by encouraged consensus rather than by official sanction. This is of course not true in law or medicine, where the practice of the work is controlled by legal mechanisms.

The cultivation of a service orientation, once thought to be the essential distinction between the professions and business, is now rather commonly diffused throughout the occupational structure. For example, many profit-making occupations claim to "serve" one or more publics. Also the whole question of occupational service orientations is complicated by

general changes in the class structure of advanced industrial society, some of which have shifted large areas of traditionally working class jobs into the service sector. Thus the older identification between "service" and "professional" work is complicated by shifting class lines. And one might, in any case, have always wondered at the sharpness of the line between "commercial" and "service" work, since it is relatively easy to dignify the former in the name of the latter. From this angle, "service" functions as an honorific as well as a descriptive label. For these and possibly other reasons, it is difficult to automatically identify professionalism with service work, although one still wants to insist on the importance of the original contrast between service and profit-making. (The interdependence of the dimensions of the professionalization process is here underscored: by itself, service orientation may not be sufficient, but in combination with the knowledge base and the professional association, it gains in importance.) Librarianship has always been extremely high on this dimension, relatively untouched by suspicions of commercialism, although even this is now conceivable, given recent developments in "information brokering." Librarians' own conception of service is rooted in nonauthoritarian values, which has not always been the case in the traditional professions, and this ideological variance has probably not advanced its occupational standing. Until recently, a general superiority over the client was an almost automatic assumption on the part of many professionals; but there is some indication that this assumption is eroding, and this may reinforce the legitimacy of librarianship's egalitarian attitudes toward patrons. Nonetheless the claim to professional status, for all occupational groups, must in some way reflect a superiority of knowledge and training as the common basis of the client's need and the practitioner's ability to serve that need.

A great many writers, far too many to acknowledge by name, are united in their concern for librarianship's relatively low showing on the social recognition dimension. A variety of causes is adduced: the overly general character of library education, the antiintellectual strain in American life, the seemingly marginal nature of library services, and the predominance of women in the field. From a slightly different angle, Newmyer argues that it is not so much the predominance of women, but rather the dominance of a stereotypically feminine image—attached to female and male librarians alike—which constitutes the block to recognition.[29] The point must be acknowledged, but it may also be that the stress on female predominance is overstated. There are a great many factors, often working simultaneously, which may impede professionalization. In engineering and accounting, for example, which are still predominantly male fields, the narrowness of the knowledge base, along with the emphasis on technical competence,

have long acted as barriers to professionalization. Yet we do not find writers arguing that the reason for this is the predominance of males in these occupations. From the viewpoint of the professionalizing occupation, it is essential to try to isolate the kinds of occupational action that will lead to a general change in the image. Three elements of the trait model stand out: the knowledge base, the university program and the association. Too little concentration on these, and too much on peripheral dimensions present additional blocks to progress. (A fourth element, autonomy, is also of importance in this connection, but its discussion is more conveniently left to a later section.)

Before leaving the social recognition dimension, it is useful to note that the development of the knowledge base stands in an essential relation to the kind and amount of social recognition that an occupation receives. A highly developed theoretical knowledge base, in other words, tends to bring recognition along with it, especially in those cases where the knowledge base is transmitted by a recognized group of scholars and educators associated with the graduate and professional schools of the universities. Thus the extent to which the public perceives a given occupation as important is partly a function of the institutionalization of its knowledge base. Recognition, of course, stems from other sources as well. To a considerable degree it comes from a social awareness of the importance of occupational activities. It may once have been easy to underestimate, take for granted, or even ignore the importance of recorded information, but it is much more difficult to do this today. If this is true, then public recognition of the importance of the information occupations will grow along with the social perception of the value of information as a social commodity. In this sense, the newer information occupations are on the front edge of the later developments of industrial capitalism; they are growing from within the socioeconomic matrix of information and knowledge production. Since widespread social awareness always lags behind socioeconomic development, the recognition of the importance of this group of occupations lags behind fact. (But the recognition in some ways has already come, at least from some specialized social sectors—the federal government, for example, recognizes the professional autonomy of librarians and some other information specialists, such as archivists, by waiving, in most cases, the employment requirement of civil service examinations.)

SOME CONTRASTS: TRAIT, FUNCTIONAL AND POWER APPROACHES TO PROFESSIONALIZATION

The discussion to this point has concentrated on what is now called, not without some critical sharpness, the trait or attribute model of professionalization. Until very recently, almost all the literature dealing with the library profession, and indeed a large part of the sociological literature dealing with professions generally, in effect assumed the validity of this model. In sociological circles, it reigned nearly supreme for decades, with only functionalism to challenge it, and it is still almost the only conception of the professions encountered in library literature today (an important exception is discussed later). This is unfortunate, for recent discussions have clearly shown that it is only one of several possible ways of understanding the professions, and that it obscures a number of important issues.[30]

In the trait approach, professionalism, and thus by implication the professionalization process, are measured on a relatively unidimensional scale. Its key theoretical assumption is essentialism—i.e., that having a certain set of qualities, or the process of acquiring them, is the crux of professionalism and professionalization. The functionalist approach[31] on the other hand holds that professionalization is not primarily a matter of acquiring attributes, but concerns rather those characteristics of an occupation which play some consequential role in society at large, or more narrowly, in the professional/client relationship.[32] By not focusing on specific sets of attributes, the functionalist view avoids the assumption of unidimensionalism, and leaves open the possibility of clusters of associated attributes indicating key activities with certain consequences for the delivery of services to clients. There is, nevertheless, some overlap between trait and functionalist views, since the functional characteristics cited are often also found on trait lists. Parsons, for example, specifies three crucial functional characteristics: formal technical training in a field whose core is a cognitive—as opposed to intuitive—body of knowledge; development of skills related to this knowledge; and an institutional framework controlling the applications of these skills.[33] Despite the clear difference of focus it is obvious that these three "functional characteristics" are quite similar to the kinds of attributes cited by trait theorists.

The general relationship between the trait and functionalist models is indicated in figure 1.

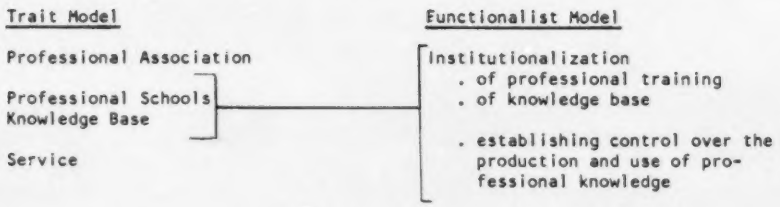

Figure 1

The overlap between trait and functionalist views has led a number of writers, particularly over the last ten years, to question both approaches and to search for an entirely different model. One of the first of these was Terence Johnson,[34] who argues that both suffer from serious limitations of historical perspective—i.e., that they are present-centered, and largely ignore the concrete conditions of occupational development. Beyond this, and more central for present purposes, Johnson holds that a fundamental conceptual confusion underlies both approaches. A profession, according to Johnson, is not itself a type of occupation, but rather a complex set of procedures for controlling an occupation. On this view "professionalization" is not the process of an occupation acquiring a set of characteristics, nor is it a set of functional characteristics displayed by an occupation. It is a process of attempting to gain and keep control over certain types of work routines.[35] Based on these and related criticisms, Johnson developed a tri-partite model of occupational control, in which these elements are distinguished. In collegial control, producers define the consumer's needs and the best manner of satisfying them, and typically rely on fellow professionals exclusively for help when problems arise. This type of occupational control, Johnson maintains, is what has traditionally been called "professionalism." In client control, users of services define both their own needs and the manner of addressing them. In mediated control a hybrid type arises, which Johnson sees as the general direction in which almost all occupations, including the collegially-controlled ones, are tending. In this case, the intervention of some powerful third party, such as a government agency, or an abstract socioeconomic force such as the market of goods and services, definitively qualifies the relationship between producers and users of professional services.

Johnson's model clearly calls for a reorientation of research and interpretation. Specifically focused historical analyses of the relationships between occupations, their clienteles, and any mediating forces replace the attempt to develop lists of key attributes or functional characteristics.[36] One impor-

tant consequence of this view is that it blurs the distinction between occupations and professions, since there are obviously no occupations of the purely collegial type, and also because we can approach the study of almost any occupation in terms of strategies for control. (For example, unionization is one such strategy, until recently only used in traditionally working-class occupations. That this has started to change is evidence in favor of Johnson's approach.)

But although the general line of thinking that Johnson and other writers represent is a very plausible one, and although they are surely right in maintaining that no theory of the professions can continue to employ the older approaches without modification, it would be a mistake to conclude that the trait and functional approaches have no validity at all. It is true that no occupation has ever been purely collegially or professionally controlled, and that numerous challenges to professional authority have to a certain extent undermined the authority of even the strongest and most traditionally established occupational groups.[37] Even so, it is evident that an examination of those occupations showing a high degree of monopolistic control over their own work operations, and over general definitions of service, are frequently the same occupations identified as highly professionalized according to the trait and functional approaches.[38] It is further observed that even if we regard trait and functional approaches as theoretically inadequate bases for sociological research on the professions, it remains true that professionalization is at least partly a process of social definition: by the occupations themselves and by the consensus of clients and the public in general. Thus to the extent that traits and functional characteristics are *thought* to be important, they *are* important, in the sense that public recognition of an occupation's activities is a central fact of its position in the social structure.[39]

The turn toward occupational control in another way reflects the continuing relevance of the earlier approaches, for autonomy has sometimes been regarded as one of the central features of professions, by trait and functional theorists alike.[40] Its most precise analysis, however, has come from the more recent approaches. For example Freidson[41] introduces the idea of "zones of autonomy" and distinguishes between "technical" or "specific" autonomy, or the level of day-to-day work routine and the operations involved in it, and "general" autonomy, or the complete control over the socioeconomic organization of the work process as it affects the professional/client relation. In the zone of general autonomy are also to be found problems in the general definition of service and the clarification of the values underlying it. Thus when we speak of "occupational control," we are really speaking of two different types of autonomy: control over the

skills and techniques of delivery, on the one hand, and control over the broadly defined social and economic goals that these are intended to realize on the other. Questions of how to deliver a service quickly and effectively, how to recruit professional workers or how to evaluate performance are technical ones, but questions like what is the meaning of health (justice, freedom to read, etc) come from the general zone. Although Freidson regards the technical zone as the most crucial to the maintenance of properly professional or collegial control, it seems clear that in the long run the two zones are interdependent.[42]

The discussion of autonomy provides a convenient point to examine one of the key ways in which the newer approaches to the study of the professions remain partly rooted in the older; for there is an essential connection between the analysis of work-related autonomy and the nature of the knowledge base upon which professional practice is founded. Insofar as occupational knowledge tends toward the pole of the technical, its mastery becomes progressively easier to reduce to sets of precisely formulated rules. This has two crucial consequences for professionalization. First, it makes the knowledge base relatively easier to master; second, it opens up occupational practice to outside—generally managerial—control. On the other hand, as the knowledge base tends toward indeterminacy, its basic procedures and principles are relatively harder to reduce to sets of technical rules, and its general accessibility diminishes, with the consequence that control from outside sources is rendered more difficult. For this reason, indeterminacy in the knowledge base favors the professional type of occupational control, while technicality favors either client control or mediation.[43]

Johnson's idea of a reorientation of research in the area of the professions has proved to be an influential one, and one finds at present a number of writers pursuing various forms of the notion of changing patterns of occupational control as central concerns. In his earlier work Johnson argued that professional control over work develops only under certain kinds of social conditions—i.e., the existence of a large, urban middle class; recruitment of workers from similar social backgrounds; and a homogeneous occupational community.[44] These conditions have, of course, all been identified as significant in the development of the library profession. Also central to this model of professional control is the fiduciary, one-to-one relationship between professional and client, where interaction is user-initiated and practitioner-terminated. In a subsequent development Johnson turns explicitly to a Marxist model of occupations, and argues that professional control exists only where it is not in the interests of capital to rationalize the work process and subject it to capital-dominated

managerial control. Types of work that escape profit-oriented rationalization, in other words, tend to establish the collegial pattern of control. Despite some recent trends in which librarians are more directly involved in profit-making operations, this would suggest that librarianship, on the whole rather removed from such activity, is safe from at least that threat to autonomy.[45] But the traditional remoteness of the librarian from the centers of production and distribution of commodities is clearly changing; and other types of information professionals are much closer to the accumulation of capital.

A much more fully developed version of the Marxist theory of the professions is presented by Larson, who argues that professionalization is the process of an occupation obtaining and holding market power. This involves the creation and control of a market for services, a demand for special status in the overall system of social and occupational stratification, and the legitimation of this status through social recognition.[46] The determination of the success of a given occupation in professionalizing is governed by such factors as the assumed value and necessity of the services, the existing level of competition to provide it, types of clientele, the cognitive or theoretical basis of the work, and a variety of external factors (e.g., special agencies or legislation exercising protective functions and restricting competition).[47]

Thus the more recent literature on the professions departs from trait and functional approaches in a number of ways. It rejects the theoretical assumption of essentialism and the methodological assumption unidimensionalism. It suggests some of the problems with a purely structural approach to occupations which ignores concrete factors in historical development. And in focusing on power as a central issue, it provides an essential recognition of the fact that the growth of the professions cannot be understood outside the context of the struggle of many occupations to dominate the world of work and achievement. This literature also departs from the earlier formulations in yet another way that is crucial to an overall understanding of the professions. It explores those factors which act as barriers or challenges to professionalism and professionalization, and even suggests the possibility of a retrograde movement in the development of occupations in advanced industrial society.

It has been noted for some time now that a somewhat paradoxical situation affects professional/client relations. The demand for services assumes a general level of knowledge, even sophistication, among users. Without an increasing level of such knowledge among clients, it would be much more difficult for professional markets to expand. On the other hand, such

sophistication also promotes greater skepticism toward professional authority.[48] This insight has been recently resuscitated along with a cluster of related issues, suggesting to some writers a movement of "deprofessionalization" or loss of professional autonomy.[49] In addition to the paradox of client sophistication, professions now also have to contend with accelerating rates of change in the production of knowledge and technology which introduces a factor of uncertainty in the professional's ability to master the theoretical and technical core of the work. (A kind of built-in obsolescence, similar to the dynamic obsolescence of the goods sector, affects the production and dissemination of professional services.) Haug,[50] for example, points to the importance of computers as one specific factor that undermines the older idea of professional control of the knowledge base; and the emergence of large numbers of computer experts to use and maintain these utilities further threatens the professional worker's autonomy in the delivery of services.[51] This is a particularly important challenge in libraries, where current staffing patterns reflect significant involvement of these new types of workers and their expertise. A similar point may be made in regard to managerial and administrative roles in libraries, which further detract from the librarian's ability to concentrate exclusively on professional work.[52] In this connection it is important to emphasize that these challenges to professional autonomy come from outside the routine tasks of the occupation—i.e., from the fact that work organizations, in their complexity, frequently contain more than one single type of occupation, and that authority may in certain cases be assumed by workers trained in related but different fields. This, however, seems not to be the case in the library profession. As a recent empirical study has shown, despite the coexistence of different occupational types in the library as an organization, it is still librarians who define, by their occupational orientations toward the leadership of library associations and the library schools, their work and the manner in which it is to be carried out.[53] But there is a closely-related threat to autonomy which comes from a neighboring source—a threat to autonomy coming, so to speak, from within. The advent of computerization, as is well known, in certain cases dramatically changes the nature of the work process itself, aside from whatever effects it may have on the occupational composition of work organizations. To the extent that automation carries the process of the division of labor further than ever before, it redefines certain tasks, once thought to be unambiguously professional, as semiprofessional or even clerical. The difficult question which this raises is whether or not there is really a *qualitative* alteration of the task at stake. Whether or not, in other words, it is more the manner of execution than the essential nature of the task that is effected. Thus it could be argued that automation does not usually qualitatively transform work; but it can make

some tasks so relatively simple that it no longer makes sense to require professionals to do them. Recently, however, a good case has been made for the claim that automation may have precisely the opposite of a deprofessionalizing effect in this area. Nielsen[54] argues that the use of computers in information retrieval has a number of professionalizing effects, including increased complexity of interaction with users, the encouragement of greater subject specialization, separation of database searching from nonprofessional reference work, and increased control over interaction with library users. In most if not all of these we can recognize elements of the model of professional or collegial control.

Aside from the interesting example of a counterthrust to the trend of challenge, there is a question of how challenges to traditionally-defined professional control are to be interpreted. In effect, we have roughly the same set of phenomena which can be viewed in different ways. One view regards such challenges as indicative of a retrograde movement in professionalization, but it seems clear that one might argue, following Johnson's three-level model discussed earlier, that the consequence of challenge to professional authority is not something called "deprofessionalization" but rather the gradual advent of mediated occupational control.[55] The deprofessionalization thesis plausibly isolates challenges to the absolute power of professional groups, but the very idea of absolute control as the basis of professional power is in itself rather questionable. Occupational control has probably never been absolute and has likely always been checked to some degree by the intervening forces of technological complexity, specialists from other fields, citizens groups, government agencies, external sources of financial support, and others.

The notion that technological developments challenge professional authority is paralleled by developments in the formal structures of work arrangements. In practice this usually refers to the extent to which work is organized along bureaucratic lines. The earlier literature on professionalization, as we saw above, points to a complex opposition between professionalization and bureaucratization; it tends to pit professionals against bureaucracies. The more recent literature examined here has some rather different implications for the whole question of bureaucratization which reflect the newer emphasis on investigating actual mechanisms of control over work. We know that bureaucratization is not in any case strictly inversely correlated with professional autonomy; in fact, it has been found that a moderate degree of bureaucratization is necessary for professional work to be carried out in the first place.[56] Second, it has been shown that bureaucratization is not necessarily, or even commonly, an external impingement of nonprofessional formal structure, even though a long tradi-

tion in the functionalist theory of the professions sees bureaucratic authority as essentially nonprofessional in nature.[57] In this more recent view, bureaucratization may, and does, flow from sources internal to a given occupation, reflecting professionals' own definitions of structure; in these cases it is an expression rather than a limitation of autonomy.[58]

THE OCCUPATIONAL CONTROL MODEL AND LIBRARIANSHIP

Bearing in mind that the trait and functional models retain important areas of relevance for the professionalization issue, it is important to look more closely at the occupational control model. We must first introduce a conceptual distinction between two foundations of occupational authority.[59] There is first what may be called a normative foundation of task definitions and general professional orientations. This is a form of collective agreement based on the strength of shared occupational orientations derived from three sources: professional associations, professional or graduate schools and professionals' descriptions of their jobs. Second, there may be a structural foundation of authority which consists of legal or other binding regulatory sanctions controlling access to the profession, exercising control over the curricula of the professional schools, and regulating the professional conduct of practitioners. In the latter case the professional association has legal authority of various kinds over its members. Reeves, in the study of librarianship cited earlier, shows that the normative foundation guarantees a high degree of autonomy in librarianship, even though there is no structural foundation of the kind that is found in law and medicine.[60] On the basis of his findings, he argues, quite convincingly, that it is a mistake to assume that the structural foundation is the only essential condition of occupational authority and autonomy.

Reeves conducted a 1974 library survey to determine the degree of correspondence between occupational standards, as set by library associations and library schools, and actual work arrangements. The study focused specifically on reference work and selection as professional tasks. In measuring orientations toward library associations, interest in the profession, and the extent to which interests and values were seen as exemplified in work settings, Reeves found a good deal of variation, especially for awareness of associations, attributable to change or work setting or type of library in most cases.[61] In those cases where occupational orientations are high, there is a strong correlation between occupational standards and actual work arrangements. In some cases there are checks against author-

ity. For example, authority appears most secure in the larger libraries with larger acquisitions budgets, and least secure where the library depends on a surrounding nonlibrary organization for financial support and library staff members depend on the expertise of users.[62] In this sense, the authority of public librarians is perhaps the most secure, while that of the special (business and government) librarian is less so. In academic libraries the picture is complicated by the fact that sources of funding are external, and by the fact that some librarians interact with patrons superior to them in expertise in certain subject areas. But the important point is that in all cases the degree of authority varies mainly with the strength of shared occupational orientations; and where they are strong, authority is preserved.

Reeves's findings are evidence in favor of the claim that librarianship significantly approaches the collegial control model in Johnson's three-part scheme. It is also clear that in certain respects the types of control shown in librarianship are mixed with a certain amount of mediation and client control, just as they often are in other middle-class occupations. Public librarians appear, at least in the task areas of reference and selection, to most clearly fit the collegial model. There is a fair amount of mediation, though not only in the academic library, while more direct client control seems confined to business and government libraries.

It can be argued that reference librarians exhibit the classic fiduciary aspect of professional control, since the librarian defines the user's needs on the basis of the reference interview, and indicates the point at which the information has been supplied, the search strategy more or less formulated, etc. But there are no findings that specifically address this point. Nonetheless, Nielsen's paper on machine-aided literature searching clearly points in this direction. The more the reference librarian is distinguished as a specialist in certain subject areas, the more remote is he/she from the provision of general information; and the technical aspects of machine searching, while not absent in manual searching, only add to the librarian's control over the interaction with the user.[63] Both the extensive Reeves study and the Nielsen paper focus in this respect on the reference librarian, but it seems plausible to extend their conclusions to other kinds of library specializations.

For example, as selection increasingly passes from outside experts to librarians whose qualifications assure their mastery of the forms and contents of one or more literatures, it too approaches the collegial control model. Since this has been occurring in the academic library since the 1940s, it can be taken as an established trend.[64] The importance of the

subject specialist in the academic library should not, however, be allowed to obscure what is in fact a more general trend toward specialization in these agencies. The academic library is now composed of many different types of library specializations. A recent study distinguishes between functional (general and specialized reference, circulation, technical, etc.), clientele type (undergraduate, graduate and faculty, returning adults), special unit (government publications, maps, serials), subject, and departmental or branch specialization.[65] In these cases specialization may be expected to produce results paralleling those already outlined for reference, selection and the moves toward machine literature searching. (None of this, of course, denies the counter-professionalizing forces mentioned before.)

In terms of Johnson's three-part model, it can be said that collegial and mediated authority forms are the most strongly established in the academic library, though the collegial form is perhaps somewhat weaker there than in public libraries. What we should not say, in any case, is that any suspicion of divergence in librarianship from the collegial model automatically indicates a loss of professional status, or a deprofessionalizing movement, for all professions, in this view, tend toward mediated forms of control.

Reeves's findings, because they isolate clearly the relationships among practitioners, library associations and library schools, are useful in interpreting more generally the role of autonomy in library work, and thus touch upon one of the central dimensions of professionalization. In general they support the claim that strong occupational orientations affect both of Freidson's "zones of autonomy." This is reinforced by the fact that major library associations' articulation of work standards covers both the special zone (in which routine skills and tasks are defined and interrelated), and the more general zone (in which the basic values and social goals of the occupation are outlined). (A more detailed presentation of this point is found in the following section.) Reeves's study does, however, isolate one important factor that threatens to undermine occupational autonomy as a whole, and that is unionization.[66] Unionization challenges professional autonomy by shifting occupational orientations away from the schools and professional associations, and supplies a different ideological emphasis in the arbitration of work disputes. Also, unions tend to recruit heavily from the ranks of nonprofessional workers, thus dividing the occupation from within and discouraging occupational cohesion.

The occupational control approach has particularly important implications for the large question, mentioned previously, of the relation between autonomy and the knowledge base of an occupation. It is time to look a bit

more closely at this. We have seen that in order to support the autonomy claim, the knowledge base must have enough indeterminacy to avoid control from forces outside the occupation.[67] Yet it must not be wholly abstract, or it loses its relation to technical concerns. The knowledge base must strike a difficult balance between techniques and skills on the one hand and abstract principles on the other. To assure this, technique must bear within itself a theoretical complexity and must be related to leading ideas. Practice must be difficult to master, and must require some use of judgment and imagination, and the general principles themselves must grow from the demands of practice. Thus in an occupation claiming professional status by virtue of its knowledge base, technicality and indeterminacy must be interwoven, each rooted in the other. This assures autonomy for the occupation as a whole, other things equal, because it protects technique from encroachment, and general principles from irrelevance. The proper relationship between the two aspects of the knowledge base successfully unites Freidson's zones of autonomy.

The knowledge base of librarianship, and for most of the information science fields as well, is centered around classification and indexing, on the one side, and the normative, value-laden concerns of the theory of intellectual freedom on the other. The normative pole may be more specifically characterized as the theory and practice of freedom of access to recorded knowledge and information. In discussing this knowledge base as an indicator of collegial control, it is necessary to see that both of these vary along the axis of technicality-indeterminacy. To avoid verbal confusion, we may refer to this axis with the terms *specificity-generality*, since our real concern is with the degree to which both technique *and* general principles encourage the formation of autonomous workers. Librarianship, of course, draws from many disciplines, and bases its practice on other related bodies of knowledge: administrative and management sciences, the general theory of automation and automated intelligence, and the social psychological study of human interaction (most notably in the area of the "reference interview"). However important these are, they are mostly borrowed ideas, which librarianship derives from or shares with a variety of related fields. Its distinctive intellectual core is made up of the interplay between the science of controlling and retrieving recorded information and the sociocultural values which attempt to assure its free movement. In this way librarianship reproduces within itself the two cultures of science and humane learning. Without the ideology of freedom of access, classification and indexing are reduced to the manipulation of a static body of received wisdom, and without the technical skills of retrieval and control, the value system loses its special relevance to the field.

Both aspects of the core of the knowledge base lie toward the center of the *specificity-generality* axis. The theory of classification and indexing presents a combination of technical and theoretical complexity that makes it difficult of access and application without extended exposure. The theory of intellectual freedom, on the other hand, presents so many problems of a theoretical and practical nature that it is virtually—especially in certain areas touching on the interpretation of the First Amendment—a field of uncrackable chestnuts. In neither case is it possible to reduce mastery of the areas involved to short periods of training or to generalized rules of thumb. Taken together, the two areas define a large, only partially-integrated field of theoretical and practical questions. Thus on theoretical grounds we may say that the knowledge base of librarianship favors collegial control.

THE NATURE OF LIBRARY WORK AND THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

The library, Schopenhauer maintained, is the collective memory of humanity; it is a concrete means for retaining accumulated knowledge and information.[68] This is an appropriate image reflecting Schopenhauer's platonism—knowledge is reminiscence of forms. The librarian assists in the process of recall, by virtue of a general grasp of the structure of knowledge that is grounded in some specialized pursuit as well. We need not, of course, be platonists to accept the image. This is not an idle matter. As Ortega y Gasset reminds us, the survival of the human species depends in large part on its ability to record and retain the lessons of the past.[69] The book—or document, as we would say now—is an adaptive mechanism for human beings, just as the claw is for a climbing mammal. As a physical extension of human thought, the knowledge record is a tool of power and utility, and without it a human group would be like a person suffering from amnesia—unable to remember past failures and successes, a victim of circumstance and slow trial and error. The imaginative power of thought—the ability to project in the mind a set of possible solutions to pressing problems—receives its input from the past as well as the present and would be greatly impoverished without it.

Thus the importance of general or liberal education in librarianship, the broader and deeper the better. General culture and general literacy, far from decadent frills of a declining civilization, lie at the heart of a particular strategy of human survival. The tendency in our society to equate "general culture" with frivolity is thus a mistaken one, the product of myopic short-run thinking. To situate the particular fact within the overall framework of things is an ability that delivers urgent practical results as

well as purely theoretical ones, for without it, specialized work falls into isolated triviality. The ideal librarian must therefore be familiar with the general structure of knowledge, and with one or more of its specialized disciplines, in order to facilitate this process of recall. There is a sense in which librarianship, as a form of cultivated generalism, goes against the grain of contemporary life, and this may account for some of the resistance to professional recognition. For this reason it is especially important not to assume that "specialists in generality" are what is required in the way of professional workers. For if it is true that specialized work can easily fall into triviality, it is also true that pure generalism falls into superficiality. Particularly important is the development of a sense of the articulation of the structure of knowledge—i.e., where the lines between subjects, subfields within them and their interrelations are drawn by scholars and other writers. The way to achieve this competence is to participate as much as possible in the process of producing and disseminating knowledge itself, through a commitment to specialized areas of knowledge and their relationships within human knowledge as a whole. In practice this goal is difficult to achieve, for reasons we will be looking at in more detail. Still, it seems unnecessary to exhibit the conservatism one sometimes encounters in the professional literature.[70] With a solid liberal education as a beginning, there is no reason why librarians and other information specialists cannot develop real competence in an additional field. It would only make for better service. There are, of course, broader and narrower definitions of service. One of the general patterns in professionalization finds the more highly professionalized worker having as much, if not more, colleague contact as client contact. Indeed, with professional groups generally, higher status workers seem almost totally removed from clients, and this is as true in librarianship as elsewhere. But if we are concerned with the development of the profession as a whole, and not merely with its higher reaches, we can see that some turn toward the community of colleagues is necessary for occupational advancement.

Even in the best of all possible worlds broad general culture, a general feeling for the structure of knowledge as a whole and additional subject competence are only the background of occupational practice. Librarians must possess special skills, training and aptitudes. Among these are verbal aptitudes, including a mastery of one's native language and as many others as possible. Even a slight acquaintance with foreign languages vastly increases the ability to extend service beyond merely local interests, for natural languages are rooted in separate ways of life, with different approaches to knowledge and its production. With a serious mastery of more than one natural language, the librarian gains a unique breadth of vision. Verbal skills are also crucial in the social psychology, communica-

tive and interactive dimension of librarianship. If a major task of librarianship is mediating the relationship between document and user, verbal skills are the core of the negotiation process. Robert S. Taylor has discussed this point in some detail, arguing that the key activity of reference work communication is the interpretation of questions, which are among the most complex types of interaction.[71]

No less important, if somewhat less stressed in the information field, are rudimentary quantitative skills, particularly those in the meta-scientific disciplines of logic, language, linguistics, and computer science.[72] Adequate mediation among records and users requires some ability to abstract the formal properties of experience from its concrete, context-bound configurations. The use of artificial languages encourages this and is especially important in the organization, storage and retrieval of documents—all those areas, in short, in which the cultural interpretation of contents and subject matter is secondary to the rational organization of documents according to their formal characteristics. As computerized cataloging and searching advance, this aspect of librarianship becomes more central. Already a great many announcements of professional positions in libraries insist on some familiarity with machine-readable formats in cataloging and bibliographic searching. The importance of formal languages can be seen in the formulas for subject searching used in various online systems.[73] To understand the basics one should have a nodding acquaintance of set theory, of boolean algebra, and perhaps truth/functional logic. In the latter case, everything except the truth values of propositions is ignored; in the case of boolean algebra and set theory the abstraction goes even further and approaches the logic of combinations in a purer form. Thus it is argued that both arithmetic and logic can be derived from a set of purely primitive operations or combination of quantities. Each of these represents, in slightly different ways, the ultimate in abstraction; more abstract even than numbers, since combinatory logics deal with things as such—i.e., universes of unspecified entities. The use of the computer in the library, it is true, occurs for the most part at a much more practical level, where the formal characteristics of documents are substituted for variables. The tendency for practitioners to be recruited from the humanities is something of a problem here, for these disciplines emphasize the interpretation of the concrete. (This is particularly true of the literary and the philological disciplines, and less true for linguistics and philosophy.)

In addition to general culture and specific verbal and quantitative skills, librarianship has traditionally placed a high premium on the values of western liberalism. This reflects partly the bourgeois origins of modern

libraries. But it is not a purely ideological affair, for libraries and librarians are frequently subjected to intense pressures of censorship. Indeed, librarians' occupational routines are interrupted in ways that no doctor or lawyer would tolerate.[74] Aside from elective courses on intellectual freedom, however, there appears to be no recognized formal means for ensuring that beginning practitioners espouse the values of tolerance and freedom of information (in fact it may be one of the paradoxes of liberalism that it has no way of doing this, and thus may be undermined from within). Such concerns are of course explicitly recognized by ALA's Code of Ethics and by this body's Intellectual Freedom Committee.[75] The belief in freedom of information and the freedom to read are analogous to the values implicit in the Hippocratic Oath and in the legal maxim that everyone is entitled to a competent defense in a court of law. It is noteworthy, in this light, that the code mentions the essential confidential relationship that exists between a library user and the library. Confidentiality in professional/client relations is one of the more important of the marks of professionalism, even though violations occur occasionally in all professions. A key point of difference between librarianship and the established professions, however, should be noted. Professional associations for librarians do not exercise the right to revoke the professional status of violators of the code as may be exercised in medicine and law.[76] This point may be important in the professionalization issue, since the establishment and review of professional status as a public expression of collective autonomy, confirming the gravity and power of the association.

It may be useful to conclude attempts at defining library work by looking at ALA's 1970 statement on education and manpower, where a key distinction is drawn between professional activity on the one hand and "routine application of rules" or "supportive work."[77] Clerical and purely technical workers and library associates at the B.A./B.S. degree level are supportive employees, while the initial step toward professional status is marked by the undergraduate degree plus graduate work in library science or some other field. (One wonders whether or not this is really valid today, since professional positions seem universally to require a Master's degree in library and/or information science, whatever other advanced work a candidate may have had.) The senior librarian requires educational qualifications beyond those mentioned—it is not specified more precisely—as well as significant professional experience. The library administrator should be recruited only from the senior librarian category.

We can see in this scheme a gradual progression toward practical autonomy—i.e., progressively higher educational qualifications, ability to work independently, supervisory and administrative skills, etc. The state-

ment is vague in other respects. What body of abstract knowledge should the professional master (library and information science or "some other field")? To what extent, if any, does the librarian have a monopoly over that knowledge and its use? What power does the professional association have in its recommendations for library education and library policy? In practice, what has occurred is that younger librarians must demonstrate competence in at least two subject areas—library science and some additional area of competence—e.g., the mastery of a liberal arts field (in certain cases at the graduate level), additional professional education (e.g., teacher certification), or specialized technical training (audiovisual skills, computer programming or technology).

LIBRARIANSHIP: OCCUPATION OR PROFESSION?

No attempt has been made in this discussion to provide a single answer to a question that has exercised a long fascination among a few sociologists and a large number of librarians. The question is deceptively simple: Is librarianship a profession? It is an interesting question, in the same way that many speculative questions are interesting, and one can only be thankful that it has been asked and has provoked so much debate. But we must distrust its simplicity, for its fascination has a way of turning hypnotic and dulling us to its assumptions. It assumes not only that we know exactly what a profession is, but also that every occupation can be so neatly defined that it may be measured against that exact knowledge. We cannot, however, assume any of this, for sociologists are still debating the first problem, and the second is far too complex in its own way, as we have seen, to admit to a single answer. There is, however, a variety of qualified answers, some of which have been suggested here, depending on one's theoretical model of professionalization, one's interpretation of autonomy, one's view of librarianship's knowledge base, and so on. Beyond these qualified answers lie only more interpretation and discussion.

But since there have been attempts to reduce the whole subject of this essay to the form of the simple question mentioned earlier, it is worthwhile spending some time to show why this kind of approach is not convincing. William J. Goode's authoritative and frequently-reprinted paper, in answering the question, states a case against librarianship.[78] (Others pit yea against nay, but that is not relevant for present purposes; what is important is the attempt to answer the question as posed.) The case is centered on four nodal points in the definition of a profession: accepted professional standards of abstract knowledge, theoretical contribution to the knowledge base by practitioners, legitimate monopoly over the knowledge, and professional/client relations.

Librarianship, according to Goode, falls short in each category. Library and information science, he argues, is not a well-defined field of inquiry; nor do librarians concern themselves greatly with making significant scholarly contribution to their field. (That this is true of most of the established professions seems to go unnoticed.) This claim is supported by some studies. For example, Elizabeth Stone's 1969 research revealed that significant numbers of academic librarians are not involved in research and do not stay current in the literature of their field.[79] Thus it is held that an underdeveloped knowledge base, coupled with low commitment to scholarly work can stimulate a cyclical process of occupational underdevelopment. Third, librarians have no special sanction over the uses of library and information science in the way in which doctors and lawyers, for example, have exclusive rights to certain uses of medical and legal knowledge. Finally, librarians do not enjoy the privileges of social and cultural control of the client. The librarian, like the doctor or lawyer, serves a client, but has no special authority over him or her, and does not dictate or attempt to enforce the "correct" view.

It should be clear by now that this line of thinking is open to a number of telling objections. Theoretically, it relies exclusively on a combined version of the trait and functional models. It does not even ask, let alone attempt to answer, any of the important questions on occupational authority which have been raised in the more recent work on the professions. In particular one may note that it also relies, using Reeves's terms, on a purely structuralist interpretation of occupations; the role of normative order in occupational groups is unrecognized. Thus while Goode is correct in saying that librarianship does not involve any legal monopoly over knowledge, this is also true for most of the academic professions and others, and should not be a cause for concern. What is most important, and what Goode does not recognize, is the existence of a social or cultural monopoly—a normatively upheld de facto control over certain types of knowledge. This is based primarily on the period of training and specialization proportional to the complexity of the knowledge, and on social recognition—not on legal sanctions. Legally, anyone who wants to may analyze a curriculum, discuss formal logic or teach organic chemistry. To conclude from this that none of these pursuits is professional is obviously to ignore the normative sanctions governing all of them. And in any event, legal norms are seldom adequate by themselves, even in structurally professionalized groups, to enforce controls on social behavior, and are always supported by informal consensus. (This is an application of Reeves's findings on normative order and collective orientations.)

This criticism also applies to Goode's last point—the social power of the professional over the client. In medicine and law this is legally sanctioned—although, as we have seen, this power is never absolute and from certain viewpoints is eroding—but the social sanctions one finds in other occupations are just as strong and accomplish similar goals. When a knowledge base develops continually, becomes more refined and complex, and is perceived as important and essential, professional power increases without help from the law. Not so very long ago, a generation at most, many of the social sciences were regarded as thinly disguised versions of commonsense thinking. American sociology was originally practiced by persons trained largely in other fields, and was often viewed by them as having short-term practical uses. That this is no longer true should make us suspicious about the power of legal sanctions in defining professions.

Empirically speaking, Goode's conclusions are equally suspect. The alleged fact that practitioners do not contribute to research literatures should not be held against any occupation, for it is usually teachers and scholars who carry out these functions and not practitioners. This is true in law, medicine and many other fields. But in fact even this amended version of Goode's view would not hold for librarianship, where there *is* significant research and publication activity among practitioners. Some findings more recent than Stone's 1969 study indicate, for example, that academic librarians are more involved in research and publication activity than has been assumed. A 1980 study showed that over 40% of surveyed libraries required librarians with faculty status to publish. Even including nonfaculty librarians, the figure is, at 15% a high figure for a group in which most persons hold full-year contracts.[80] Another study confirms that in comparison with other occupations, working librarians make substantial contributions in the area of research literature.[81] Thus the empirical evidence is not easy to evaluate and is somewhat ambiguous. What it perhaps indicates is that in librarianship the traditional division between theoretical and practical labor does not seem to hold. And of course this is an interesting and important issue. But it does not mean that library science has no research literature.

Goode's argument, and many like it, rest on assessments of the research literature, and thus it seems appropriate to look at this literature and note some of its characteristics. We are greatly aided in this by Peritz's recent study, one of the first to exhaustively treat the research literature of the field.[82] The period between 1960 and 1970 saw a significant increase in output, especially for the last five years of the decade; and, in fact, rates of growth appear higher in library science than in many other fields.[83] A good deal of this increase relates to the scientific and technical aspects of infor-

mation processing, but many other areas of library science are also represented: library management, library history, collection development, etc.[84]

Peritz's study also provides some evidence for the point about the anomalous division of theoretical and practical labor mentioned above. It is true that library educators contribute relatively little to the research literature, though there have been substantial increases. The proportion was as low as 10% in the early years of this century, and grew to about 25% in 1975.[85] Most of the literature centers around university, college and special libraries. There is relatively little research on public and school libraries (this does not, however, hold true for the literature of librarianship in Great Britain[86]). About half of the user studies deal with the professionally affiliated user. Studies dealing with a specific subject matter almost always treat professionally salient areas of interest, with about 70% of this work falling somewhere in the natural sciences. Methodologically, empirical approaches predominate ("empirical" here includes "historical") but the number of theoretical papers is also significant.[87] The median number of citations in library science papers is relatively low compared with some other fields, except for theoretical papers and works on automation.[88] Finally, the use of citation-based measures shows a significant increase in the scholarly characteristics of the literature.[89] In summation, a picture not so very different from the research literatures in many other fields.

But while we must object to Goode's model of professionalization and its conclusions about librarianship, still we must recognize that this approach, especially in its more purely functionalist aspects, is useful in understanding some further problems in the professionalization process that have not yet been considered. The structural/functional perspective in American sociology has contributed greatly to our understanding of a whole range of problems centering on the interplay between social structures and the social roles imbedded in them. It has particularly clarified these problems as they relate to the complex limitations that social structure places on an individual's ability to fulfill a diverse set of socially shared expectations. Three of these are briefly discussed: external mobility (defined as change of employer), conflict between structural situation and role performance (role strain), and that special type of personality development that involves the performance of the occupational role (professional socialization).

A recent study by Taylor presents many important findings relevant to external mobility. Greater mobility is linked with activity in national associations, continuing part-time study, and the production of research and scholarly literature.[90] Professional activity leads to increased mobility

chances, and these in turn bring new occasions for further professional involvement. (The multiplication of professional contacts, not mentioned explicitly in this study, is probably an important part of this process.) Some of these findings on female librarians are particularly interesting, for they raise questions about the feminization thesis. It is true that women generally have lower mobility chances, and thus tend to show lower levels of professional involvement. As we might expect, salary and mobility are associated only for females, suggesting that low-involvement males are not penalized for their immobility. But Taylor observes that immobile females tend to be significantly older than their mobile male and female colleagues. Thus we must consider age as well as sex in the explanation of delayed professionalization. And despite the fact that males are generally more mobile, this should not obscure the fact that nonmobile males exhibit the same tendency toward low involvement that we see in nonmobile females.

Impediments to mobility are blocks contributed by the surrounding society. Other barriers, such as late career decision, the fact that normatively professionalized groups show different forms of autonomy than structurally professionalized ones, sex role, and age are all rooted in general patterns of social behavior. Occupations have histories and are embedded in preexisting networks of norms, values and social reward. But another kind of obstacle, long ignored, also deserves attention—what we may call structural constraint. Certain obstacles come, that is, from the formal characteristics of occupational behavior itself, and not from the characteristics of the individuals making up an occupational group. In any social group there are explicit or implicit norms of behavior which reflect shared values. Norms and values are supported by enforced obligations defining expected role performance. In discussing the role structure of a social group we always distinguish between the actual performance—the behavior, action or what is sometimes called "role performance" or "role enactment"—and the role itself, which is a typical expected pattern of behavior. Since these two seldom mesh perfectly, we can learn something about adequacy of performance by comparing them.

In certain cases, adequacy of performance is checked by a structurally-embedded incompatibility of role obligations; there is in these cases a tendency toward "role strain."[91] Classic examples may be found in all the major types of social roles. An example of occupational role strain can be found in academic librarianship, where there is a structural competition between allegiance to library science and allegiance to some additional subject area,[92] and something like this is probably occurring in other library fields as well. The resulting strain is partly dependent on previous

educational background, and can be expected to increase as subject commitment outside library science increases. The pressure is maximal for the librarian with advanced graduate work in the subject field. If one's loyalty to library science is too strong, one's ability to give service to faculty colleagues falls off. If one opts for one's subject field as a working scholar—which is, after all, the best way to understand it—it is unlikely that one will make as many contributions to the literature of librarianship. This is something in the way of a structural problem inherent in librarianship itself, with its peculiar tension between general and the specific. This makes an imposing barrier, and it may be something like an absolute block to further professionalization. But this depends on our definition of the division of occupational labor. If we have a thriving group of scholars working the library education field and maintaining the research establishment of the field as a whole, it diminishes considerably in importance. At that point the scholarly contributions of working librarians, in or out of academic librarianship, can only add to the professional development of the field.

But this kind of problem occurs only for those librarians who are already relatively highly professionalized; it affects the more developed reaches of the process, and is not a block to progress at other levels. Thus one might say that, given the presence of a core of researchers and teachers in the graduate schools, it is not necessary for librarians in other fields to make the same kind of scholarly contribution. But there are problems in the production of research by library educators, recently given a hearing by Wilson.[93] Until these problems are addressed, we cannot expect this sharing of responsibility to materialize. What is required, in Wilson's view, is the socialization of library educators to the academic model of performance: greater stress on research activities, a lessening of emphasis on the service-related activities of the professional association, more encouragement of research activities from library school deans and directors, and a turn toward more basic research by holders of library doctorates.[94] Some of the obstacles Wilson identifies are admittedly more elusive than these: the lack of collegial support for research, the recruitment of library school faculty from practitioner ranks and a reward structure in the library school at partial variance with the academic reward structure. One important possibility for change, not directly addressed by Wilson but consistent with the spirit of her analysis, lies with an increased emphasis on research and the discussion of important ideas in the professional associations. The academic socialization of which Wilson speaks could be enhanced immeasurably by greater official support of research activities at professional meetings. In most academic disciplines, such meetings play a crucial role in prepublication communication. In most academic associations, the

principal reason for meeting at all is to exchange ideas in formal meetings, panels and informal settings. And some of the greatest benefits to the development of the knowledge base are intangible and accidental, coming from temporary frequency of interaction. Of course library associations already perform a similar function for practical problems, and the need is to extend this function into the area of basic research.

The problem of the knowledge base is so central to Goode's argument that it is worthwhile to consider it a bit further. While Goode is correct in his judgment that librarianship needs development in this area—and a great many librarians have anticipated him in this[95]—it is also evident that his judgment rests on something less than a complete analysis. To evaluate the knowledge base of a profession we need to look more specifically at the character of that knowledge and the primary means for disseminating it. We should be aware that much of what passes for knowledge in the professions is not always as theoretical or scientific as one might think, and we must recognize that numerous extraneous factors enter into its collection and dissemination, some of which have little or nothing to do with pure inquiry. Thus, while it is important to stress the role of the double-blind referee system in journal article evaluation,[96] we should also realize that this system has not prevented the perpetration of bias.[97] The familiar problem of editorial fiat in library literature is a serious one, but its solution will not automatically promote a more scientific body of literature. Thus the sociology of the professions has as one of its tasks the study of stratification and inequality within the professions themselves. At this point, librarians concerned with professionalization are well-advised to explore the institution of refereed publication formats, but they are equally well-advised to be aware of some of their problems.

The lack of an adequate theoretical body of knowledge is, as we have seen, a serious obstacle to the professional development of an occupation. It is often said that library literature has been dominated by short-run practical concerns. This is only partly true, and it should in any case reassure librarians to know that other disciplines face similar if not identical problems. Recent examinations of the scholarly literature of the social sciences disclose a strong antitheoretical tendency—a turn toward the short, crisp, fundable, empirical study which is often not well-integrated into the knowledge base of the profession. In a symposium on sociology periodicals, for example, no less than four contributors cite the lack of serious theoretical work in the major journals of the field.[98] This is not, of course, to say that such work is not being done, but only that it is not being represented in the official journals, and is done in a fragmented way, preventing theory from exercising its guiding and integrating force.

These points on the knowledge base are raised not to discredit its importance, but to illustrate the point already briefly mentioned—that the various dimensions of professionalization are interdependent. Thus, problems in the knowledge base, combined as they are with low public recognition and complicated by structural constraint, are probably more serious in librarianship than the same problems are in other disciplines. Sociologists, in other words, do not raise issues of theoretical poverty out of a concern that their occupation might not be fully professionalized, and this is because the position of that occupation on the various dimensions of professionalization is more secure.

CONCLUSION: A COMPOSITE MODEL FOR THE LIBRARY PROFESSION

I have suggested that there is something to retain in each of the models of professionalization that have been examined here, based on the fact that they share certain elements and that each represents something about the professions essential to their explanation and understanding. And this, I would also argue, is true despite the partisanship with which the current debate in the sociology of the professions is proceeding. We may certainly learn from the occupational control approach, for example, that the trait and functionalist models are not by themselves sufficient for understanding the social meaning of the professions. But we need to underscore by way of conclusion that the common elements remain. If we keep an open mind to what has been said here about librarianship, we may then offer a tentative suggestion for a combined sociological model for use in further study of the library and information science occupations.

From the trait model mentioned earlier (see fig. 1), what especially stands out are: the professional associations; the professional schools and their formal education; the knowledge base; and the service orientation toward clients, where this is understood primarily in fiduciary terms. Since the social recognition dimension seems dependent on the work of others, it is not included here, though its importance is obvious. Ethics codes, while obviously also important, appear to be so unevenly diffused throughout the middle class occupations that it is difficult to consider them essential to the professionalizing occupation. In this regard another point may be made—i.e., that the formal code is probably of much greater significance in what Reeves calls the structurally professionalized groups, where sanctions take on a legal character. In normatively professionalized groups—such as librarianship—where formal sanctions governing behavior may not exist in legal form, the ethics code is of correspondingly lesser signifi-

cance in the professionalization issue. The importance of ethical issues, on the other hand, is of great importance to the library profession, and is addressed in the humanistic aspect of the knowledge base—i.e., the theory of intellectual freedom.

Functionalism (see fig. 1) shares with the trait approach a heavy emphasis on formal cognitive training in the knowledge base. Its distinctive contribution lies with the idea of the institutionalization of both of these. It is not enough that there exists a knowledge base and that it is taught to beginners, it must in some sense be officially recognized or established in an explicit social agency which is itself integrated into the larger society. The parent institution, in functionalist terms, is education, of which the professional school is one small part. Institutionalization regularizes, formalizes and establishes a setting and a continuing tradition of scholarship and preparation for practice. Of course, this is very closely related to the trait model's stress on the professional school, but has much more general social implications. (Functionalism does not overtly recognize the professional association, which is another reason why the trait model cannot be totally abandoned.) The functionalist model complements the trait approach well, because in the latter there is no mechanism of social control to ensure that knowledge will be produced and imparted in ways that benefit the occupation and its publics. The institutionalization process, in other words, is left entirely implicit in the trait model. Clearly, this is especially important for the normatively professionalized groups which lack mechanisms of a formal-legal nature.

The occupational control model seems at first to push aside everything except autonomy, and to elevate it to the status of the unique principle of the professionalization process. But this is only superficially true. We saw from the Reeves study that autonomy reflects and is confirmed by the strength of collective orientations toward tasks and routines. But this in turn involves the standard-setting functions of the professional schools and the professional associations, especially the national ones. Thus according to this model the social control over knowledge that functionalism attributes to institutionalization, is imparted by both the schools *and* the associations, and is validated by the shared orientations of working librarians. Thus the occupational control model gives some of the same prominence to professional schools and associations that is found in the trait model, but only covertly recognizes the institutionalization process. Nonetheless it insists that the central issue is autonomy, with the others arising from it or supporting it. The service orientation is more explicitly analyzed by this approach than by either of the other two, for service is defined by type of control exercised. (We have seen that librarianship

shows a mix of collegial and mediated control, and thus also a mix of fiduciary and mediated models of service.)

In this model social control is interactive between the schools, the associations and the practitioners, while functionalism tends to describe the process as moving "from the top down," from the established schools to the practitioner. Reeves's findings on collective orientations speak strongly for the utility of this part of the model for the library profession. In the trait model, autonomy is based on the training period and the difficulty and complexity of the knowledge base. In the functionalist model, autonomy is buried in the institutionalization process, but still most directly touches the training period and the knowledge base. In the occupational control model it involves the professional association, the schools and the cohesiveness or strength of shared orientations of practitioners. The knowledge base, in the control model, remains implicit in the professional school.

The models' interaction is presented in figure 2. A representation of interactions of the composite model is presented in figure 3.

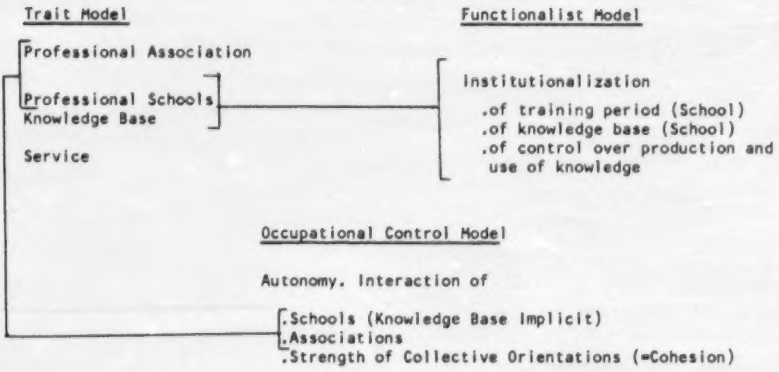

Figure 2

The composite model suggests, of course, a great many relationships that could be studied, as well as effectively covering much of what has already been done in studying the professionalization process in the library field. For example, the connection between the schools and the knowledge base, resulting in institutionalization, pinpoints the problem of the establish-

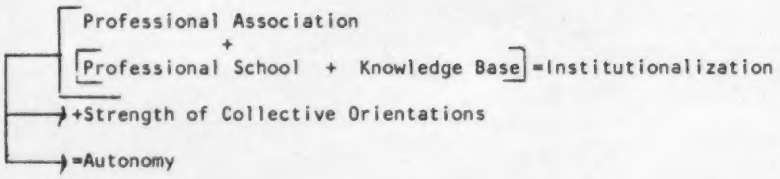

Figure 3

ment of the library occupation in the social structure as a whole. (Pauline Wilson's research on the role of library educators and their academic socialization, already mentioned, fall into this category.[99]) The study of the professions has, of course, produced many studies of law and medicine in this vein, but librarianship has not in any major way yet received this kind of theoretical treatment. The connection between the associations, the schools and the collective orientations is the subject of Reeves's study, and the general idea could be extended into a more comprehensive study including tasks and routines outside the two areas of reference and selection. These are two areas in which ground has already been broken, but in which there is also much more to be done.

But although the vertical and horizontal dimensions of the model are being studied, there are some areas that seem not to have been touched at all, and they too should be mentioned as areas in which work need to be done. For example, we need to know more about the relation between library associations and the creation and maintenance of the knowledge base. We need empirical studies of such groups as the Association of College and Research Libraries, the Library History Round Table, the Library Research Round Table, the Association of Research Libraries, and others. All these produce or sponsor significant research, and thus contribute to the institutionalization of the field, in some cases directly, and in some through the schools. This is a possibility observed neither by the trait nor the occupational control model. In looking at this relationship, we uncover a connection only implicit in the composite model (see fig. 4).

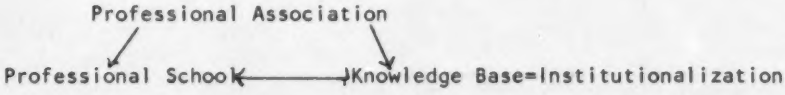

Figure 4

There are, of course, many smaller questions that emerge in looking at the composite model. By way of conclusion, one additional major question seems too important not to mention specifically: the question of whether or not the institutionalization process affects the autonomy of the working librarian. Reeves's study suggests rather that it is the standard-setting of the associations and the schools that most directly affects autonomy via occupational cohesion. But since there is an important overlap between the forces which do this and those which create the knowledge base, it may be that the institutionalization process is directly involved in the maintenance of autonomy, by directly contributing to the strength of shared orientations. In this case one might look at the socialization of the library school student, rather than that of the educator, as an empirical indication of the degree to which institutionalization affects the cohesion of practitioners.[100]

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